

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 3477

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SW
SUBJECT: SUPREME MILITARY COMMANDER RECOMMENDS POSTPONEMENT
OF TOW MISSILE PROCUREMENT

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: STOCKHOLM DAILY SVENSKA DAGBLADET
ON SEPTEMBER 5 PUBLISHED BRIEF INTERVIEW WITH OUTGOING
(ON OCTOBER 1) SUPREME COMMANDER GENERAL STIG SYNNERGREN DEALING
LARGELY WITH EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT PRIORITIES. OF INTEREST IS
HIS DECISION TO POSTPONE FOR SEVERAL YEARS AT LEAST PURCHASE OF THE
US TOW MISSILE. EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

2. BEGIN TEXT: THERE WILL BE NO ANTI-TANK TOW MISSILES FOR
THE ARMY, ACCORDING TO SUPREME COMMANDER STIG SYNNERGREN.
INSTEAD, HE RECOMMENDS INCREASING THE LENGTH OF CONSCRIPTS'
REFRESHER TRAINING. THE ACQUISITION OF OTHER MATERIEL SHOULD
BE POSTPONED, HE STATES, IN WHAT AMOUNTS TO A REBUFF FOR
ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL NILS SKOLD.

GENERAL SKOLD SUBMITTED HIS 5-YEAR PLAN FOR THE ARMY TO
THE GOVERNMENT SEPTEMBER 1 AND THE DEFENSE STAFF IS NOW
DRAWING UP A COLLECTIVE APPRAISAL OF DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS
BETWEEN NOW AND 1984. IT IS ALREADY EVIDENT THAT THE
ARMY HAS BEEN TOO OPTIMISTIC IN ITS CALCULATIONS. THERE
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SIMPLY IS NOT SCOPE FOR ANTI-TANK MISSILES AND EVEN LESS
SCOPE FOR THE HELICOPTER ALTERNATIVE.

LAST YEAR THE ARMY COULD HAVE BOUGHT THE AMERICAN TOW
MISSILES FOR 120 MILLION SWEDISH CROWNS, BUT IT WOULD NOW
COST AN ESTIMATED 200 MILLION, THE FORMER CONTRACT HAVING
BEEN DISSOLVED WHEN THE ARMY ENCOUNTERED A LIQUIDITY CRISIS

LAST FALL.

DEFENSE MINISTER ERIC KRONMARK HAD SAID ALREADY EARLIER THAT IT WAS VERY UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE ARMY COULD HAVE ANY NEW MISSILES. THE SUPREME COMMANDER IS NOW EXPECTED TO ASSIGN A POSSIBLE ORDER FOR TOW MISSILES TO THE LAST YEAR OF THE PERIOD COVERED BY THE CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY DEFENSE RESOLUTION, I.E., 1981-82. IT IS UNCERTAIN, MEANWHILE, WHETHER THE MISSILE CAN BE PROVIDED FOR EVEN IN THAT BUDGET.

THIS IMPLIES IN ALL PROBABILITY THAT IF THE TOW MISSILE IS NOT BOUGHT BEFORE 1982, THEN IT NEVER WILL BE PURCHASED BY THE SWEDISH ARMY. THE ARMY DEPLORES THIS, POINTING OUT THAT THE MISSILE IS IN FULL SERIES PRODUCTION IN THE USA, WHICH WOULD FACILITATE A SWIFT ORDER.

THE SUPREME COMMANDER ALSO WISHES TO WAIT TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS SCOPE FOR A CRACK, MODERNIZED INFANTRY BRIGADE. IT IS LIKEWISE UNCERTAIN AS TO WHEN A FULL ORDER CAN BE PLACED FOR A NEW TRACKED VEHICLE.

INSTEAD, SYNNERGREN SEEKS TO USE ALL THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR EXPANDING AND IMPROVING CONSCRIPT REPETITION TRAINING AND HE INSISTS THAT THE CUTS WHICH HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS MUST NOT BE REPEATED. THIS YEAR, FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY ABOUT HALF THE PLANNED REFRESHER
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TRAINING WILL BE FULFILLED. IT IS STILL NOT CERTAIN TO WHAT EXTENT THIS CAN BE IMPROVED UPON IN 1979-80. SYNNERGREN WILL SUBMIT HIS SUMMARIZED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 1979-84 TO THE GOVERNMENT ON SEPTEMBER 29--THE SAME DAY AS HE RETIRES FROM ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE. END TEXT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: IN THE WAKE OF THE US DECISION TO VETO A POSSIBLE SALE OF THE VIGGEN AIRCRAFT TO INDIA, SEVERAL WELL-PLACED SWEDES IN GOVERNMENT HAVE INTIMATED THAT SWEDISH DEFENSE PROCUREMENT POLICY SHOULD BE REVIEWED AND ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF SUPPLY CONSIDERED, I.E., WHETHER THE HEAVY DEPENDENCE ON US EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY MIGHT BE REDUCED. THE EMBASSY WILL BE MONITORING THIS TREND IF INDEED IT DEVELOPS. IN THE IMMEDIATE CASE OF THE TOW MISSILE, WE DOUBT SERIOUSLY WHETHER SYNNERGREN'S DECISION TO DELAY OR POSTPONE (OR CANCEL) THE TOW PURCHASE HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH VIGGEN POST-MORTEMS. IT IS RATHER AN INTRA-MILITARY DISPUTE OVER WHICH PROGRAMS SHOULD BE DOWNGRADED AS DEFENSE FUNDS, RELATIVELY, BECOME MORE LIMITED. SYNNERGREN OBVIOUSLY HAS CHOSEN TO SAFEGUARD THE CONSCRIPT AND REFRESHER TRAINING PROGRAMS AND FOREGO CERTAIN ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT INCLUDING THE TOW. END CONFIDENTIAL.

KENNEDY-MINOTT

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